



BIPARTISAN POLICY CENTER

January 24, 2013

U.S. Senator Chris Coons
127A Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

U.S. Senator Marco Rubio
284 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senators Coons and Rubio:

On behalf of the Bipartisan Policy Center's (BPC) Energy Project, I want to thank you for underscoring the importance of technological innovation in economic growth and international competitiveness through your proposed America INNOVATES Act. We endorse your bipartisan efforts to strengthen the American innovation ecosystem and increase the economic return from public investments in science and R&D.

Founded in 2007 by former Senate Majority Leaders Howard Baker, Tom Daschle, Bob Dole and George Mitchell, BPC is a Washington-based think tank that actively seeks bipartisan solutions to some of the most complex policy issues facing our country. In addition to energy, BPC has ongoing projects on health care, homeland security, housing, political reform, immigration, the federal budget and financial regulatory reform.

We believe public investment in energy innovation is key to a vibrant American economy. Our Energy Project has two initiatives which have focused on energy innovation including the American Energy Innovation Council (AEIC) and the Strategic Energy Policy Initiative (SEPI).

BPC works in conjunction with AEIC, a group of America's top business executives who convened starting in 2010 to recommend ways to promote American innovation in clean energy technology. AEIC's leaders, including Bill Gates, Jeff Immelt, and other current and former CEOs, are united in their belief that technology innovation--especially in energy--is critical to solving the many economic, national security, competitiveness, and environmental challenges facing our nation.

We support efforts to make the American innovation ecosystem more robust. AEIC has authored case studies on the government's role in energy technology innovation. Our [case studies](#) have identified numerous instances of both anticipated and unforeseen applications resulting from investments in science and R&D. Moreover, advances in computation, materials and other broadly-applicable fields support improvements in a wide range of technologies. Programmatic silos defined by a single discipline or technology are increasingly obsolete. By consolidating the Under Secretary for Energy and the Under Secretary for Science into a single leadership, the America INNOVATES Act facilitates better coordination between related innovation activities at DOE. Doing so will enable U.S. public investments in science and R&D to accelerate the cycles of invention and discovery, maintaining America's competitive edge in the global race for new technology.



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Additionally, we support efforts to increase the return on public investment in science and R&D. Public-private partnerships have demonstrated value – not only guiding public investments to more productive activities, but also ensuring that lab discoveries become useful, commercial goods and services. The America INNOVATES Act gives the National Labs needed flexibility to enter into more effective partnerships with businesses and universities and unlocks more resources to support those partnerships by reducing administrative burdens.

Oversight should accompany these changes to ensure public funds are used effectively. BPC's Strategic Energy Policy Initiative, led by former Senators Byron Dorgan and Trent Lott, released its [bipartisan recommendations](#) in February 2013 after two years of research and deliberation. One of the recommendations of the report urged Congress to order a regular, external review of the effectiveness and management of DOE's R&D portfolio. While the recently-passed 2014 omnibus appropriations bill orders DOE to establish an independent "Commission to Review the Effectiveness of the National Energy Laboratories" and propose improvements in management and efficiency, the America INNOVATES Act builds on these efforts by mandating better coordination of DOE's existing oversight mechanisms for the National Laboratories.

Accelerating technology innovation is a smart investment for America's future. We thank you for your continued, bipartisan emphasis on public investments in science and R&D to keep the U.S. economy competitive and growing.

Sincerely,

Margot Anderson
Executive Director, Energy Project
Bipartisan Policy Center